

Message Text

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ACTION EB-08

INFO OCT-01 ARA-10 ISO-00 CAB-02 CIAE-00 COME-00
DODE-00 DOTE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00 FAA-00 L-03 NSC-05
SS-15 /054 W

-----048452 072305Z /70

P 072232Z APR 78

FM AMEMBASSY CARACAS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 1844

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE CARACAS 3261

EO 11652 NA

TAGS: EAIR VE

SUBJ: CIVAIR: PANAM'S EXTRA SECTION

REF: A) STATE 86678 B) CARACAS 2801 C) CARACAS 3216

1. REFTEL B DESCRIBED THE ACTIONS WE TOOK IN CONNECTION WITH THE MARCH 17 REQUEST. TO BE SURE THE DEPT UNDERSTANDS FULLY THE POSITION TAKEN BY THE GOV AT THAT TIME, WE DETAIL HERE THE EXACT ARGUMENTS USED BY THE DIRECTOR OF AIR TRANSPORT TO JUSTIFY THE DECISION:

A) THE GOV IS ATTEMPTING TO CURB THE OVERBOOKING SITUATION AND THAT SUFFICIENT PASSENGERS TO FILL A 747 CERTAINLY SHOW THAT PANAM'S OVERBOOKING SITUATION IS SERIOUS, IF THAT WAS THE REAL REASON FOR THE REQUEST;
B PANAM HAD NOT PREVIOUSLY REQUESTED THIS EXTRA SECTION AS PART OF AN EXTRA SECTION PACKAGE FOR THE MONTH AND
C) IF NO OVERBOOKING HAD TAKEN PLACE, THE REASON FOR THIS SUDDEN INFLUX OF PASSENGERS MUST HAVE BEEN THAT PANAM HAD PLANNED AND SCHEDULED THIS FLIGHT EARLIER (WHICH IS INCONSISTENT WITH THE AUG 76 MEMO), OTHERWISE THE TRAVEL AGENTS WOULD NOT HAVE BEEN ABLE TO SELL TICKETS.

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2. AS INDICATED IN REF B, HOWEVER, THE MORE BASIC CAUSE IS THE BROADER GOV'S REACTION TO THE WASHINGTON TALKS AND THEIR CONSEQUENT CONCLUSION (REFTELC) THAT WE ARE UNILATERALLY DISREGARDING THE BILATERAL AGREEMENT WHEN IT SUITS OUR PURPOSE. THAT, IN EFFECT, IS THEIR PERCEPTION, RIGHT OR WRONG, AND THEY FEEL INTENSELY ABOUT IT. THAT BEING THE REAL

PROBLEM, IT IS CLEAR THAT THE TALKING POINTS SUGGESTED
IN REF A ARE MORE LIKELY TO IRRITATE THAN TO
PERSUADE. THAT IS TO SAY, ARGUING THAT THEY SHOULD
ADHERE TO A BILATERAL UNDERSTANDING(THE 1976 MEMO) WOULD
MOST LIKELY REAWAKEN ALL THEIR FRUSTRATIONS AND THE CHARGE
THAT THAT WAS THEIR ARGUMENT IN REVERSE REGARDING ITEMS
DESCRIBED REFTEL C. (AS ONE OFFICIAL PUT IT AFTER
THE WASHINGTON MEETING: "IF THE USG CAN FEEL FREE TO
INTERPRET THE BILATERAL UNILATERALLY, SO CAN WE.")
NOR DO WE THINK THAT THE THREAT IMPLICIT IN POINT C
OF REFTEL A IS LIKELY TO BE HELPFUL AT THIS STAGE.

3. IN SUM, WE BELIEVE THAAT THE PROBLEM IS BASICALLY
PSYCHOLOGICAL AND WE BELIEVE THAT THE PROBLEM OF
AUTHORIZING EXTRA SECTIONS CAN BE TAKEN CARE OF
(INDEED WE EXPECT APPROVAL OF THE MONTHLY EXTRA
SECTION PACKAGE) IF WE CAN REESTABLISH THE RELATION-
SHIP WE ONCE HAD AND CALM THEIR CONCERNS AS
RECOMMENDED IN REF C). LOCAL PANAM MANAGER
CORROBORATES OUR ASSESSMENT OF THE SITUATION.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: SUPPLEMENTAL AIRLINES, AVIATION REGULATIONS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 07 apr 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978CARACA03261
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780151-0521
Format: TEL
From: CARACAS
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780482/aaaacrpg.tel
Line Count: 83
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 21a6d4b4-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION EB
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 78 STATE 86678, 78 CARACAS 2801, 78 CARACAS 3216
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 05 may 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: N/A
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 3045250
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: CIVAIR: PANAM'S EXTRA SECTION
TAGS: EAIR, VE
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/21a6d4b4-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014